

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Fig 2. A schematic comparison between protein GRAB and protein G is shown in A. The complete nucleotide (SEQ ID NO: 27) and amino acid sequence (SEQ ID NO: 7) of *grab*/protein GRAB is shown in B.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 26, line 11, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Hybridization protocol is carried out as follow. Streptococci were grown in Todd-Hewitt broth with 0.2% yeast extract (THY) in 5% CO₂ at 37°C. Genomic DNA was prepared from *S.pyogenes*. 20µg of DNA was cleaved by *EcoRI* and subjected to agarose gel electrophoresis and capillary blotting onto Hybond-N filters (Amersham, Amersham, UK). A probe was generated by PCR using *Taq* polymerase and synthetic oligonucleotides with sequences GACTCACCTATCGAACAGCCTCG (SEQ ID NO: 28) and AGCTTCTTCTGATTGTAAAGCG (SEQ ID NO: 29) hybridizing to *grab*. The PCR product was purified on a MicroSpin™ S-200 HR column and was radiolabeled with [α -32P]dATP using bacteriophage T4 polymerase. Membrane was prehybridized in a solution of 6xSSC, 0.5% SDS, 5xDenharts solution, and 100µg/ml salmon sperm DNA at 50°C for two hours. Probe was boiled for five minutes and added to a solution of 6xSSC, 0.5% SDS and 5xDenharts solution and incubated for 14 hours at 65°C. This was followed by washing at room temperature in 2xSSC +0.5% SDS for five minutes and 2xSSC+0.1% SDS for 15 minutes. Further washes were performed in 0.1xSSC+0.5% SDS at 37°C for one hour and in 0.1xSSC+0.1% SDS at 53°C for 30 minutes. Filter was air dried followed by exposure on BAS-III imaging plate and scanning with Bio-Imaging Analyser BAS-2000.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 31, line 25, with the following rewritten paragraph:

For an inhibition ELISA, post immune sera from sheep immunized with the peptide conjugates mentioned above, were pre-incubated at 37°C, for 1 hour, at a dilution of 1/10,000, with the corresponding free peptide at concentrations ranging for 0 to 10µg/ml. For controls, post